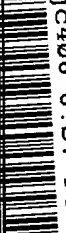



12/16/98

 408 U.S. PTO	UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL (Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))		Attorney Docket No. 981488	Total Pages
	First Named Inventor or Application Identifier			
	Masaru KUMAZAWA			
	Express Mail Label No.			
Check Box, if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Duplicate				
APPLICATION ELEMENTS FOR: PRINTER CONTROLLER, PRINTING SYSTEM, AND RECORDING MEDIUM THEREFOR		ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents BOX PATENT APPLICATIONS Washington, D.C. 20231		
<p>1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fee Transmittal Form (Incorporated within this form) (Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)</p> <p>2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specification Total Pages [29]</p> <p>3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing(s) (35 USC 113) Total Sheets [18]</p> <p>4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oath or Declaration Total Pages [5]</p> <p>a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newly executed (original)</p> <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> Copy from prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d) (for continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed).</p> <p>i. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Deletion of Inventor(s)</u> Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in prior application, see 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).</p> <p>5. <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporation by reference (useable if box 4b is checked) The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.</p> <p>6. <input type="checkbox"/> Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)</p> <p>7. <input type="checkbox"/> Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all necessary)</p> <p>a. <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Readable Copy</p> <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)</p> <p>c. <input type="checkbox"/> Statement Verifying identity of above copies</p> <p>ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS</p> <p>8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assignment Papers (cover sheet and document(s))</p> <p>9. <input type="checkbox"/> 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement (when there is an assignee) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney</p>				

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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications
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First Named Inventor or Application Identifier

Masaru KUMAZAWA

PAGE 2 OF 3

10. ☐ English translation Document (if applicable)

11. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement

☐ Copies of IDS Citations

12. ☐ Preliminary Amendment

13. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)

14. ☐ Small Entity Statement(s)

☐ Statement filed in prior application
Status still proper and desired.

15. ☒ Claim for Convention Priority

☒ Certified copy of Priority Document(s)

a. Priority of _____ application no. _____ filed on _____ is claimed under 35 USC 119.

The certified copies/copy have/has been filed in prior application Serial No. _____.

(For Continuing Applications, if applicable).

16. ☐ Other _____

17. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:

☐ Continuation ☐ Division ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application no. _____/_____

FEE TRANSMITTAL	Number Filed	Number Extra	Rate	Basic Fee
The filing fee is calculated below				\$760.00
Total Claims	18 - 20		x \$18.00	
Independent Claims	3 - 3		x \$78.00	
Multiple Dependent Claims			\$260.00	
Basic Filing Fee				760.00
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Fee for recording enclosed Assignment			\$40.00	40.00
TOTAL				\$800.00

**UTILITY PATENT
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(Only for new nonprovisional applications
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PAGE 3 OF 3

☒ [XX] A check in the amount of \$800.00 is enclosed to cover the filing fee of \$760.00 and the assignment recordation fee of \$40.00.

☐ [] Please charge our Deposit Account No. **01-2340** in the total amount of _____ to cover the filing fee and the _____ assignment recordation fee. A duplicate of this sheet is attached.

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18. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

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RFN/yap

PRINTER CONTROLLER, PRINTING SYSTEM, AND
RECORDING MEDIUM THEREFOR

5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a printer controller, a printing system and a recording medium therefor and, in particular, it relates to a printer controller, a printing system and a recording medium which can realize minimum double printing and data assured printing, without deteriorating a performance of the printer, even if a printer incapable of transmitting a print completed signal is used and an error such as a paper jam occurs in the printer.

2. Description of the Related Art

In general, a printer controller is provided between a host which requests printing and a printer. The controller receives printing data transmitted from the host and transfers the data to the printer and controls the printer to print while monitoring the states of the printer.

In the prior art, if a printer incapable of transmitting data containing an error signal and printer state data to the controller or the host is used, when an error such as a paper shortage in a paper-cassette, a paper jam or a power failure has occurred, the controller works as below.

The controller judges whether data can be transferred by checking that power has been supplied to the printer, stops the data transfer when an printer error has been detected during transferring data and resumes the data transfer after the error has been corrected.

When an error in the printer is detected during transferring data, the controller sends a command to initialize the printer and resumes printing for each

file.

When assuring the printing data, in other words, when checking whether the printing data is recoverable and not missed, a feed completion wait
5 command, namely, a command for making the printer wait to respond to the data transfer of the next page until the printer completes feeding the printed paper, is added to the printing data.

Printing systems in the prior art pose several
10 problems that cause abnormal printing such as data skip, page skip, character change and the like when an error has occurred in the printer and the printing is resumed after the error has been corrected. For example,

(1) When consecutive printing data is
15 transferred after a power supply to the printer is recovered after the power supply turned off during printing, namely, after the printer becomes ready for printing after the power turned off.

(2) When consecutive printing data is
20 transferred after a paper jam has been corrected after the jam occurred during printing.

In addition, when a command for making the printer wait until the printer completes feeding the printed paper is added, data transfer of the next page
25 cannot be started for printing because the printer waits for a response to the transferring data of the next page until the printer completes feeding the printed paper. Thus, such a printing system in prior art as explained above poses a problem in that a decrease in performance
30 in continual printing, as compared with normal printing, occurs because the mechanical performance of the printer cannot be fully utilized.

In order to solve the above problems, a printer controller comprising a storage means for storing
35 printing data and a managing means for managing printed pages with the use of the storage means is disclosed in Japanese Patent Publication No. 2-217281 and

No. 9-114618, wherein Japanese Patent Publication No. 2-217281 requires retransmission from a host to the controller while Japanese Patent Publication No. 9-114618 does not require the same for error recovery. According to the technique of these disclosed controllers, the number of printed pages can be managed and error recovery can be accomplished. However, the controllers require a storage means for storing printing data, thus the controllers cannot be made compact or economical.

10 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Therefore, it is an object of the present invention to solve the above problems and provide a printer controller, a printer system and a recording medium for the same, without providing a storage means for storing printing data, and capable of realizing minimum page skipping and minimum double printing and capable of assuring printing data without deteriorating the performance of the printer when the printing is resumed after an error has been corrected.

20 A printer controller according to the present invention which solves the above problems, receives printing data for each page from a host, transfers the printing data to a printer and controls the printer to print the printing data while monitoring states thereof.

25 The printer controller is characterized in that it comprises: an analyzing unit that analyzes the printing data and manages the number of pages transferred to the printer; and an error processing unit that informs error data and the number of pages of which printing has been completed to the host when an error in which data is not assured occurred in the printer.

30 A printing system according to the present invention comprises a host, a controller and a printer controlled by the controller. The host comprises a function to analyze printing data and a function to manage the printing data for each page. The controller comprises an analyzing unit, an error processing unit, a printer

recognizing unit, a set data storage unit, and a data transferring unit.

Each unit in the controller executes the following processes:

5 (1) The analyzing unit analyzes the printing data transmitted from the host and manages the number of pages transferred to the printer.

 (2) The error processing unit monitors the states of the printer and executes a process of error data
10 informed from the printer. For example, when an error in which data is not guaranteed occurs in the printer, the unit informs the error data and the number of pages of which printing has been completed by the time when the error occurred, to the host.

15 The host transmits printing data of which printing has not yet completed to the controller, and makes it possible to re-print for each file based on the information informed from the controller, after the printer has recovered, by correcting the error.

20 (3) The preset data storage unit stores preset data of the printer connected to the controller. The analyzing unit and the error processing unit execute the respective processes with the use of the preset data.

 (4) The preset data storage unit can also store
25 preset data of the printer informed from the host. The analyzing unit and the error processing unit execute the respective processes in accordance with a function of the printer informed from the host and stored in the preset data storage unit.

30 (5) The printer recognizing unit recognizes types, functions and the like of the printer connected to the controller by testing the printer. The analyzing unit and the error processing unit execute the respective
35 processes in accordance with the function of the printer stored in the preset data storage unit and recognized by the recognizing unit.

 (6) The data transferring unit transfers printing

data to the printer.

(7) A plurality of analyzing units may be provided, each corresponding to each type of printer connected to the recognizing unit in the controller which is
5 recognized by the recognizing unit, and one of the analyzing units is selected according to the type.

(8) In case a printer incapable of transmitting a paper feeding completion signal is connected to the controller, the error processing unit estimates the
10 number of pages of which printing has completed based on the mechanical function of the printer and transmits the estimated number of pages with error data to the host.

According to the present invention, which solves the aforementioned problems, a printing system is
15 provided which comprises a host, a controller that receives printing data for each page transmitted from the host and a printer that receives the printing data from the controller and carries out printing while monitoring the states of the printer by the controller, is
20 characterized in that: said controller comprises, an analyzing unit that analyzes the printing data and manages the number of pages transferred to the printer, and an error processing unit that informs error data and the number of pages of which printing has been completed
25 to the host when an error in which data is not assured occurred in the printer, wherein when an error occurs in the printer, said host transmits printing data of which printing has not been completed to the controller based on data informed by the controller after the printer is
30 recovered by correcting the error, said controller transfers said printing data to the printer and controls the printer to carry out re-printing for each page.

According to the present invention which solves the aforementioned problems, a recording medium is
35 provided which is readable by computers on which programs are recorded which enable a computer to proceed the steps of receiving printing data for each page from a host,

transferring the printing data to a printer and
controlling the printer to print the printing data while
monitoring states thereof, is characterized in that:
said programs enable said computer to function as an
5 analyzing unit that analyzes the printing data and
manages the number of pages transferred to the printer;
and an error processing unit that informs error data and
the number of pages of which printing have been completed
to the host when an error in which data is not assured
10 occurred in the printer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will be more clearly
understood from the description as set forth below with
reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

15 Fig. 1 is a general constitutional view showing a
printing system of an embodiment of the present
invention;

Fig. 2 is a view for explaining a constitution of
the controller shown in Fig. 1;

20 Fig. 3 is a view showing a format of a printing data
stream transmitted from the host to the controller, both
shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a view showing a format of a printing data
stream transmitted from the controller to the host, both
25 shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 is a flowchart showing a routine for setting
a type of a printer connected to the controller, both
shown in Fig. 1;

30 Fig. 6 is a view showing a printing data management
table;

Fig. 7 is a view for explaining details of printing
time assigned to a page printer;

35 Fig. 8A is a view showing an example of a parameter
table related to paper sizes for various kinds of
printers;

Fig. 8B is a view showing another example of a
parameter table related to cassette locations for various

kinds of printers;

Fig. 9 is a flowchart showing a routine for data transfer from the controller to the printer, both shown in Fig. 1;

5 Fig. 10A is a flowchart (in a normal condition) showing a routine for counting the number of normally printed sheets by a controller to which a second type printer having no function of informing the print completion signal, is connected;

10 Fig. 10B is a flowchart showing a timer interrupting routine related to Fig. 10A;

15 Fig. 10C is a flowchart (in a normal condition) showing a routine for counting the number of normally printed sheets by a controller to which a first type printer, having a function of informing the print completion signal, is connected;

Fig. 11A is a flowchart (when an error has occurred) showing a routine for counting the number of normally printed sheets by a controller;

20 Fig. 11B is a flowchart showing a timer interrupting routine related to Fig. 11A;

Fig. 12A is a flowchart (when double-sided printing is executed) showing a routine for counting the number of normally printed sheets by a controller;

25 Fig. 12B is a flowchart showing a timer interrupting routine related to Fig. 12A;

Fig. 13 is an example of a timechart showing a data transfer from a controller to a page printer when a plurality of pages are continuously printed;

30 Fig. 14 is another example of a timechart showing a data transfer from a controller to a page printer when a plurality of pages are continuously printed;

35 Fig. 15A is a flowchart showing a routine for counting the number of normally printed sheets by a page printer when a plurality of pages are continuously printed; and

Fig. 15B is a flowchart showing a timer interrupting

routine related to Fig. 15A.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The preferred embodiments of the present invention will be described below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Fig. 1 is a general constitutional view showing a printing system of an embodiment of the present invention. In Fig. 1, 10 denotes a host that requests printing, 20 denotes a controller and 30 denotes a printer. The host 10 and the controller 20 are connected via a Local Area Network (LAN) 40. The controller 20 and the printer 30 are connected with a cable 50 in accordance with the Centronics interface (I/F). A plurality of hosts 10 can be connected to the controller 20 via the LAN 40.

The host 10 comprises functions to analyze the printing data and to manage printed data for each page. The host 10 transmits printing data of which printing has not yet been completed to the controller 20 and makes the controller 20 resume the recovery printing in which the printing data to be transmitted from the host 10 is determined based on an error data informed from the printer 30 via the controller 20, or an error data detected by the controller 20 and informed to the host 10 although the printer 30 is incapable of transmitting the error data, and the number of normally printed pages by the printer 30 which is calculated by the controller 20.

When printing is requested from the host 10, the controller 20 receives the printing data, analyzes data and transfers the data to the printer 30 for printing.

When an error such as a paper jam has occurred in the printer, the controller recognizes the error data of the printer at that time which indicates the number of print completed pages and etc., calculates the number of pages of which printing have completed, and informs the same to the host 10. After the error of the printer 30 is removed, the controller 20 informs to the host 10 that

the error is corrected. Then, the host 10 resumes printing for each page for the uncompleted pages.

Fig. 2 is a view for explaining a constitution of the controller shown in Fig. 1.

5 The controller 20 comprises a network control unit 21, a plurality of printing data analyzing units 22-i ($i = 1$ to N), a preset data storage unit 23, a data transferring unit 24, an error processing unit 25 and a Centronics I/F unit 26.

10 The network control unit 21 comprises a receiving buffer 21a and a transmitting buffer 21b, thereby receiving data transmitted from the host 10 and transferring the data to the analyzing unit 22, and transmitting error data and/or print completion signal to
15 the host 10.

 The printing data analyzing unit 22 consists of a plurality of printing data analyzing units 22-1 to 22-N, each adapted to each different kind of printer so that a plurality of data types such as languages supported by
20 the printers can be handled. A printing data analyzing unit 22-i ($i = 1$ to n) adapted to a language supported by the printer 30 is selected based on the model name of the printer 30 obtained from the printer 30 or the printing data.

25 When the controller 20 receives printing data transmitted from the host 10, the data is passed to the printing data analyzing unit 22-i, and the unit 22-i analyzes the data. By this analysis, the page end, namely, data amount per page, size of printing papers,
30 currently used cassette location when a paper feeding unit consisting of a plurality of cassettes for stocking printing papers is used, and printing control data indicating, for example, whether or not double-sided printing is requested, are obtained.

35 The data transferring unit 24 determines interval of the data transfer for each page based on the printing control data obtained by the analyzing units 22-i and the

model name of the printer 30 connected to the controller 20.

5 The Centronics I/F unit 26 transfers printing data to the printer 30 and recognizes a state of the printer 30 and acquires a nibble mode of the IEEE-1284 interface and the device ID (identification) number. In case printers in which the nibble mode is supported are connected to the controller, detail error data and the number of print completed pages can also be acquired.

10 The error processing unit 25 converts error data acquired via the Centronics I/F unit 26 from the printer 30 to an error code for transmitting it to the host 10 via the transmitting buffer 21B. The error processing unit 25 also judges whether the error data
15 transferred from the printer is assured or not. The assured error data herein means printing data which does not require retransmission from the host 10 because the printing data is recoverable and not missed, while non-assured error data means printing data which need
20 retransmission from the host 10.

 In case the error is not an assured one, the error processing unit 25 commands the printer 30 to erase printing data and calculates and obtains the number of normally printed pages, and transmits the error code, the
25 number of normally printed pages and a flag indicating that the printing data is not assured (guaranteed), to the host 10 via the transmitting buffer 21b.

 When the host 10 receives the number of normally printed pages and the flag indicating that the printing
30 data is not assured, the host retransmits the uncompleted printing data to the printer 30 via the controller 20.

 After setting a network environment setting, for example, an IP address setting from the host 10, has completed in accordance with the TELENET protocol
35 supported by the controller, a model name and the function level settings of the printer 30, and customizing data settings which can be set by users, the

preset data storage unit 23 stores the above set data into a non-volatile memory such as EEPROM.

Fig. 3 is a view showing a typical format of a printing data stream transmitted from the host 10 to the controller 20, both shown in Fig. 1.

Data assigned as interface data between the host 10 and the controller 20 in a network as shown in Fig. 3, which is data for a proper protocol used for communication between the host 10 and the controller 20, and is necessary data for the host 10, like "host defined printer name" or the like, is set.

In the main part, printing data to be actually transferred to the printer 30 are assigned in such a format as "printing control data such as a paper size and a cassette location", "character data to be printed" and so on in series for each page. As shown in Fig. 3, "a page end mark" is attached to each end of the printing data for each page.

Fig. 4 is a view showing a typical format of a printing data stream transmitted from the controller 20 to the host 10, both shown in Fig. 1. As shown in Fig. 4, the format includes a "header", an "error code" indicating error data in a printer, "the number of printed pages" indicating the number of normal print completed pages and a "flag" indicating whether the error in the printer 30 is recoverable or requires retransmission of the printing data.

When an error requiring retransmission of the printing data occurs in the printer 30, the number of normal print completed pages is set in the part of "the number of printed pages" and "1" is set in the "flag" indicating that retransmission of the printing data is required, then the data stream is transmitted to the host 10.

Fig. 5 is a flowchart showing a routine for setting a type of a printer connected to a controller.

In steps S1, the controller 20 judges whether or not

the power is supplied to the printer 30. If the result in step S1 is YES, the controller 20 sends a request command to the printer 30 in order to acquire the device ID of the printer in step S2. In step S3, whether or not
5 the printer 30 has responded to the request command in step S2 is checked. If the result in step S3 is YES, the controller 20 sets the model name of the printer 30 in accordance with the device ID reported by the printer 30 in step S7.

10 In case the printer 30 does not respond to the request command in step S3, it can be judged that the printer is not the type which conforms to the IEEE-1284 I/F so that the process proceeds steps S4 to S8 to acquire the type of the printer. In step S4, the
15 controller 20 judges whether or not a request for printing is transmitted from the host 10, if the result is YES, step S5 proceeds, and if the result is NO, the routine ends. In step S5, it is judged whether or not the host defined printer name set in accordance with the
20 interface data between the host 10 and the controller 20 in printing data in response to the print command, as explained with reference to Fig. 3, can be acquired, namely, it is judged whether or not the printer model name set by the host can be acquired. If the result is
25 YES, step S8 proceeds to acquire the printer type set by the host. If the result is NO, step S6 proceeds to acquire the printer name stored in the preset data storage unit 23.

In addition to the routine explained above, if a
30 printer name acquired from the host 10 different from a printer name acquired from the printer 30, the controller 20 passes a setting error to the host 10.

If a host incapable of setting the host defined printer name is used, since the value is not set in the
35 field of the host defined printer name in the printing data, a device model name stored in the preset data storage unit 23 is used.

After the printer name is determined by executing the routine explained above, the analyzing unit 22 takes out the printing data received via the communication line out of the receiving buffer, and analyzes the printing data based on the determined type of the printer and manages the data for each page.

Fig. 6 is a view showing a printing data management table. The printing data analyzing unit 22 generates the table in which each printing data is assigned for each page as shown in Fig. 6 after the printing data from the host 10 is received in the buffer 21b. Then the data divided into pages and managed by the analyzing unit 22 are passed to the data transfer controller 24, and the data are transferred to the printer 30 via the Centronics I/F controller 26.

The calculating unit for calculating the number of print completed pages executes different routines depending upon the three different types of the printers as described below.

(First Type): Printers capable of informing the number of normal print completed pages in accordance with the nibble mode of IEEE-1284.

(Second Type): Printers such as a laser beam page printer incapable of informing the number of normal print completed pages in accordance with the nibble mode of IEEE-1284.

(Third Type): Printers such as line printers, serial printers and multi-purpose printers, incapable of informing the number of normal print completed pages in accordance with the nibble mode of IEEE-1284.

In the first type of printers, the number of normal paper feeding completion pages can be acquired by checking data from the printer when the error is informed from the printer.

In the third type printers such as a line printer having only a line buffer, normal paper feeding completion can be acquired by confirming the completion

of transferring data indicating page end because the printer has only the line buffer for the temporarily storing printing data for a few lines.

On the other hand, in case of the second type of printers such as a page printer, even if page end data is transferred, it is not always the case that the page has completely printed since printing data for a plurality of pages can be buffered in the printer. Because of this, the controller monitors printing time and estimates the completion time of normal printing. Namely, as the printer does not inform the print completion, the controller presets an imaginary time for paper feeding completion and regards that the normal printing has completed when the error has not been informed from the printer for a period of the preset time.

Fig. 7 is a view for explaining details of printing time assigned to the second type of printers, for example, page printers.

In case of the second type of printers, the printing speed, the number of pages printed per minute (ppm) of each printer is known as a mechanical performance. As apparent from Fig. 7, the timer monitoring time corresponding to the imaginary time for paper feeding completion can be given by the following equation.

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{(The timer monitoring time)} \\ &= \text{(data handling time)} + \text{(mechanical start up time)} \\ &+ \text{(delay time caused by the cassette)} \\ &+ \text{(paper feeding time)} \quad \dots (1) \end{aligned}$$

wherein the data handling time is a period started from the completion timing of the data transfer from the printer controller 20 to the printer 30 and is handled by the printer, the data handling time is set to "0" except for particular data types, and the mechanical start up time is set to "0" except for the first printing page.

Fig. 8A is a view showing an example of a parameter table to obtain respective mechanical start up time and paper feeding time related to paper sizes for various

kinds of printers, and Fig. 8B is a view showing another example of a parameter table to obtain respective delay time related to cassette locations for various kinds of printers. In these tables, measured values or calculated values are preset. The timer monitoring time can be

5

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{(The timer monitoring time)} \\ & = \text{(mechanical start up time)} \\ & + \text{(delay time in the cassette)} \\ & + \text{(paper feeding time)} \quad \dots (2) \end{aligned}$$

10

As an example, assuming that the printer type, MODEL 1, is connected to the printer controller 20, paper size A4 is used, and one page is printed by using papers stocked in the No. 2 cassette, the timer monitoring time is given by $(t1 + t1X + t1B)$.

15

Fig. 9 is a flowchart showing a routine for data transfer from a controller to a printer.

First, in step S1, printing data is analyzed in the printing data analyzing unit 22. In step S2, the page data is acquired. Next, in step S3, whether or not the printer 30 connected to the printer controller 20 is the first type is checked. If the result is YES, namely, if the printer 30 is the first type, the routine ends. If the result is NO, the process proceeds to step S4. In step S4, whether or not the printer 30 is the second type such as a page printer is checked. If the result is YES, namely, if the printer 30 is the second type, the process proceeds to step S5. If the result is NO, namely, if the printer is the third type, the routine ends.

20

25

30

If the printer 30 is the second type, for example, a page printer, whether or not the double-sided printing is designated or not is checked in step S5. If the result is NO, the paper feeding time for the single-side printing is obtained with reference to the table as shown in Fig. 8A in step S6. If the result is YES, the paper feeding time is obtained with reference to a similar table to that shown in Fig. 8A in which paper feeding

35

time for the double-sided printing is preset in step S7.

Next, in step S8, the delay time in the cassette is read from the table as shown in Fig. 8B. In step S9, whether or not the first print for the page is checked.

5 If the result is YES, the process proceeds to step S10. In step S10, the mechanical start up time is read from the table as shown in Fig. 8A. If the result is NO, the process proceeds to step S11. In step S11, the data transfer unit 24 transfers printing data for a page to
10 the printer 30 via the Centronics I/F unit 26. In step S12, the timer monitoring time is calculated based on the equation explained before. In step S13, the timer is started to complete the process.

Figs. 10A, 10B, 10C, 11A, 11B, 12A and 12B are
15 flowcharts showing a routine for counting the number of normally printed sheets in a normal condition executed by the controller 20 according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 10A is a flowchart showing a first routine for
20 counting the number of normally printed sheets in a normal condition when the second type printer is connected to the controller, and Fig. 10B is a flowchart showing a timer interrupting routine triggered by the first routine.

25 In Fig. 10A, in step S1, the print data analyzing unit 22 transfers the printing data for each page from the data transfer unit 24 to the printer 30 via the Centronics I/F controller 26 in which the printing data is transmitted from the host 10 and received by the
30 network control unit 21. In step S2, the analyzing unit 22 increases the number of pages transferred as the printing data by one. The process calculates the monitoring timer as explained before in step S3, and sets the timer for the interrupting routine in step S4.

35 When the monitoring time has passed while the printer 30 did not generate any error, the timer interruption routine shown in Fig. 10B, is started. In

step S6, the number of normally printed sheets is increased by one.

In step S5, whether or not printing data for the next page is prepared is checked, if the result is YES, the process returns to step S1 and repeats steps S1 to S5. If the result is NO, the process ends.

Fig. 10C is a flowchart showing a second routine for counting the number of normally printed sheets in normal condition when the first type printer is connected to the controller.

In Fig. 10C, steps S1, S2 and S5 are the same as those in Fig. 10A. Thus, the explanation is omitted and only steps S3 and S4 will be explained below. In step S3, whether or not the printing has been completed is checked, if the result is YES, the process proceeds to step S4, if the result is NO, the process returns to step S3. In step S4, the number of normally printed sheets is increased by one.

Fig. 11A is a flowchart showing a third routine for counting the number of normally printed sheets in case an error has occurred, and Fig. 11B is a flowchart showing a timer interrupting routine triggered by the third routine.

In Fig. 11A, steps S1, S2, S3 and S4 are the same as those in Fig. 10A. Thus, the only steps S5 to S11 will be explained below. In step S5, whether or not the monitoring time has passed without receiving any error from the printer 30 is checked. If the result is YES, the process proceeds to step S7, if the result is NO, the process proceeds to step S6. In step S6, whether or not printing data for the next page is prepared is checked. If the result is YES, the process returns to step S1 and steps S1 to S6 are repeated. If the result is NO, the process proceeds to step S7. In step S7, an error report data is generated and the number of normally printed sheets is acquired.

If the Centronics interface interruption is

triggered by an error in the printer before the monitoring time has passed, the timer interruption routine as shown in Fig. 11B, is started.

In step S8, the error processing unit 25 checks
5 whether or not the printing data is assured, if the result is YES, step S9 proceeds. If the result is NO, step S10 proceeds. In step S9, an error report data in an error code is generated, and transmits the error code to the host 10. In step S10, a command to erase the
10 printing data is given to the printer 30, the number of normally printed sheets is acquired, and the above number of normally printed sheets and a flag indicating a command for request to retransmit the printing data, are transmitted to the host 10, along with the error code.
15 In step S11, a paper feeding completion monitoring timer is canceled, if the timer is set.

Fig. 12A is a flowchart showing a fourth routine for counting the number of normally printed sheets in normal condition and double-sided printing is selected when the
20 second type printer is connected, and Fig. 12B is a flowchart showing a timer interrupting routine triggered by the fourth routine.

In Fig. 12A, in step S1, the print data analyzing unit 22 transfers the printing data for each two pages
25 from the data transfer unit 24 to the printer 30 via the Centronics I/F controller 26 in which the printing data is transmitted from the host 10 and received by the network control unit 21. In step S2, the analyzing unit 22 increase the number of pages transferred as the
30 printing data by two. The process calculates the monitoring timer in step S3, and sets a timer for interruption in step S4, as explained before.

When the monitoring time has passed without receiving any error from the printer 30, the timer
35 interruption routine shown in Fig. 12B, is started. In step S6, the number of normally printed sheets is increased by two.

In step S5, whether or not printing data for the next page is prepared is checked, if the result is YES, the process returns to step S1 and steps S1 to S5 are repeated, if the result is NO, the process ends.

5 As explained above, when the double-sided printing is executed, the number of normally printed sheets is monitored for each two pages, in which a first page for one side of a sheet, a second page for the other side of the sheet. Thus, the number of normally printed pages
10 reported to the host 10 is always even.

Fig. 13 is an example of a timechart showing a data transfer from a controller to a page printer when a plurality of pages are continuously printed, and Fig. 14 is another example for the same.

15 In Figs. 13 and 14, black star marks indicate transfer end timing and white star marks indicate paper pick-up timing, wherein the paper pick-up means a motion to bring a sheet of paper to the position to start printing after picking up the paper from a cassette in
20 which printing papers are stocked. In Figs. 13 and 14, T1 indicates a period from the transfer end timing to the paper feed end timing which is monitored by the paper feeding completion monitoring timer, and T2 indicates a period from the start timing of paper feeding to the
25 paper pick-up timing which is monitored by the next page data transfer start monitoring timer.

Fig. 13 shows an example of the timechart in which the paper feeding of the previous paper has not yet completed when a data transfer from a controller to a
30 page printer has completed. In Fig. 13, the timer for counting T1 time and the timer for counting T2 time start counting when the data transfer for one page to the printer has completed. Note that T2 in the first page printing is longer by the delay time of the cassette as
35 compared with T3 for paper pick-up in the second page printing in the continuous printings.

The data transfer for the second page starts just

after the pick-up for the first page has completed. Just after the data transfer for the second page has completed, the T2 timer starts counting. After the third page, the data transfer starts if the paper feeding for previous page but one has been completed after the paper pick up has completed.

In this way, data transfer starts with the completion of the paper feeding for the previous page but one. Thus, the printer can avoid over flow of the buffer and can avoid miscapture of the error data when an error occurred in the printer. Furthermore, the number of errors in calculating the number of printed pages of which paper feeding has completed, can be reduced.

Fig. 14 shows an example of the timechart in which the paper feeding of the previous paper has completed when a data transfer from a controller to a page printer has completed. As shown in Fig. 14, when the paper feeding for the previous page has been completed as shown in the third page printing, when the data transfer has just completed, the paper feeding completion monitoring timer T1 indicating a period from the transfer end timing to the paper feed end timing and the next page data transfer start monitoring timer T2 indicating a period from the start timing of paper feeding to the paper pick-up timing are respectively set by adding the first print delay time since the printer mechanically stops. Note that the time period T2 to pick up paper for the first and the third pages are longer by the first print delay time in the cassette as compared to T3 to pick up paper for the second and the fourth pages during continuous printing is executed as shown in Fig. 14.

Fig. 15A is a flowchart showing a fifth routine by the controller for counting the number of normally printed sheets printed by a page printer when a plurality of pages are continuously printed, and Fig. 15B is a flowchart showing a timer interrupting routine triggered by the fifth routine.

First of all, in step S1, whether or not the data transfer monitoring timer T2 for the previous page but one is counting is checked. If the result is YES, step S1 is repeated. If the result is NO, the process proceeds to step S2. In step S2, the printing data for one page is transferred to the printer 30. Then, in step S3, the number of printing data transferred pages is increased by one.

In step S4, whether or not the data transfer is for one page is checked. If the result is YES, step S6 proceeds. If the result is NO, step S5 proceeds. In step S5, whether or not the data transfer monitoring timer T2 for the previous page has been timed up is checked. If the result in step S5 is YES, a step S6 proceeds. If the result in step S5 is NO, step S7 proceeds. In step S6, the first print delay time in the cassette is read from the table as shown in Fig. 8A.

Next, in step S7, the monitoring time is calculated in accordance with the equation explained before. In step S8, the interruption timer is started. In step S9, whether or not the printer error has occurred is checked. If the result is YES, the process proceeds to step S11. If the result is NO, the process proceeds to step S10. In step S10, whether or not printing data for the next page has been prepared is checked, if the result is YES, the process returns to step S1 and steps S1 to S10 are repeated, if the result is NO, the process proceeds to step S11. In step S11, an error report is generated and the number of the normally printed pages is acquired.

When the monitoring time passes the preset time while the printer 30 does not generate any error, the timer interruption routine as shown in Fig. 15B, is started. In step S12, the number of normally printed sheets is increased by one.

The parameter table for monitoring printing time and used for calculating the number of normally printed sheets based on the paper size and the parameter table

for calculating the delay time based on the cassette locations explained before are stored in the setting data storing unit. Data stored in these tables can be changed from the host 10 with the use of the function of TELENET supported by the printer controller 20.

Next, installation of programs of the invention will be described below. The printer controller 20 as shown in Fig. 2 comprises a CPU, a ROM, a RAM, an I/O interface and the like. Programs to make the controller 20 function as the network control unit 21, the printing data analyzing unit 22, the set data storing unit 23, the data transfer unit 24, the error processing unit 25 and the Centronics I/F unit 26 are run by the CPU, and the programs are stored in the ROM in advance and are written from the ROM to the RAM when the CPU runs the programs. These programs can be processed by a typical data processing system such as a personal computer or a workstation of which hardware consists of a CPU, an RAM as a main storage means, a hard disk as an auxiliary storage means, a display unit, a printer, an input device such as a keyboard and the like.

When installing the programs of the invention into such a computer system, the programs are recorded onto a portable recording medium such as a floppy disc or an optical disc, for example, a CD-ROM, in advance. The programs are loaded onto the main memory (RAM) in the computer system by means of a floppy disc drive or a CD-ROM drive. The programs may be directly written onto the memory with the use of the keyboard by operators. The programs can also be installed from a partner computer connected to the computer employed via a modem over telephone networks or via a terminal adapter over LANs. In this case, the programs may be installed to the auxiliary storage in the computer employed from a recording medium in the partner computer via the networks. The CPU writes the data installed in the auxiliary storage to the main memory, if necessary, and

run the programs.

As heretofore explained, the printer controller according to the present invention is advantageous in the following points.

5 (1) The printer controller can minimize page skip and double printing when printing is resumed after an error occurred in a printer without providing a storage means for storing printing data, and can avoid the deterioration of the performance of the printer and can
10 assure the printed data.

 (2) Since the printer controller has a preset data storage unit for storing information of the printer connected to the printer controller and a plurality of analyzing units corresponding to different kinds of
15 printers, the controller can properly work corresponding to functions of the printers connected thereto.

 (3) Since the number of print completed pages is calculated based on the printing performance of the connected printer, even if a printer incapable of
20 reporting the completion of paper feeding is connected, the printer controller can transfer the number of print completed pages to the host, and can avoid page skip and double printing, and can control the printer to reprint for each page.

25 It will be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing descriptions are preferred embodiments of the disclosed printer controller and that various changes and modifications may be made in the invention without departing from the spirit and scope thereof.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A controller that receives printing data for each page from a host, transfers the printing data to a printer and controls the printer to print the printing data while monitoring states thereof is characterized in that it comprises:

an analyzing unit that analyzes the printing data and manages the number of pages transferred to the printer; and

an error processing unit that passes error data and the number of pages of which printing have been completed to the host when an error in which data is not assured occurred in the printer.

2. A controller according to claim 1 wherein, said analyzing unit is provided with a plurality of analyzing units corresponding to different types of printers, and one of the analyzing units is selected corresponding to the type of printer connected to the controller.

3. A controller according to claim 1 wherein, said controller further comprises a preset data storage unit that stores preset data of printers to be connected to the controller,

said analyzing unit and said error processing unit execute the respective processes based on the preset data of a printer currently connected to the controller which is stored in the preset data storage unit.

4. A controller according to claim 2 wherein, said controller further comprises a preset data storage unit that stores preset data of printers to be connected to the controller,

said analyzing unit and said error processing unit execute the respective processes based on the preset data of a printer currently connected to the controller which is stored in the preset data storage unit.

5. A controller according to claim 1 wherein,
said controller further comprises a
printer recognizing unit that inquires and recognizes
functions of the printer connected to the controller,
5 said analyzing unit and said error
processing unit execute the respective processes based on
the functions of a printer currently connected to the
controller recognized by the printer recognizing unit.

6. A controller according to claim 2 wherein,
10 said controller further comprises a
printer recognizing unit that inquires and recognizes
functions of the printer connected to the controller,
said analyzing unit and said error
processing unit execute the respective processes based on
15 the functions of a printer currently connected to the
controller recognized by the printer recognizing unit.

7. A controller according to claim 3 wherein,
said controller further comprises a
printer recognizing unit that inquires and recognizes
20 functions of the printer connected to the controller,
said analyzing unit and said error
processing unit execute the respective processes based on
the functions of a printer currently connected to the
controller recognized by the printer recognizing unit.

25 8. A controller according to claim 3 wherein,
said preset data storage unit stores
preset data of the printer informed from the host in
advance.

9. A controller according to claim 5 wherein,
30 said preset data storage unit stores
preset data of the printer informed from the host in
advance.

10. A controller according to claim 1 wherein, when
a printer incapable of transmitting a paper feed
35 completion signal is connected to the controller, said
error processing unit estimates the number of pages of
which printing have been completed based on the

performance of the printer and transmits the estimated number of pages with error data to the host.

11. A printing system comprising a host, a controller that receives printing data for each page transmitted from the host and a printer that receives the printing data from the controller and carries out printing while monitoring states of the printer by the controller, is characterized in that:

said controller comprises,
an analyzing unit that analyzes the printing data and manages the number of pages transferred to the printer, and

an error processing unit that passes error data and the number of pages of which printing have been completed to the host when an error in which data is not assured occurred in the printer, wherein

when an error occurred in the printer,
said host transmits printing data of which printing has not been completed to the controller based on data informed by the controller after the printer is recovered by correcting the error,

said controller transfers said printing data to the printer and controls the printer to carry out re-printing for each page.

12. A recording medium readable by computers on which programs are recorded which enable a computer to proceed the steps of receiving printing data for each page from a host, transferring the printing data to a printer and controlling the printer to print the printing data while monitoring states thereof, is characterized in that:

said programs enable said computer to function as

an analyzing unit that analyzes the printing data and manages the number of pages transferred to the printer; and

an error processing unit that informs

error data and the number of pages of which printing have been completed to the host when an error in which data is not assured occurs in the printer.

5 13. A recording medium according to claim 12
wherein,

 said analyzing unit is provided with a plurality of analyzing units corresponding to different types of printers, and one of the analyzing units is selected corresponding to the type of a printer connected
10 to the controller.

 14. A recording medium according to claim 12
wherein,

 said controller further comprises a preset data storage unit that stores preset data of printers to
15 be connected to the controller,

 said analyzing unit and said error processing unit execute the respective processes based on the preset data of a printer currently connected to the controller which is stored in the preset data storage
20 unit.

 15. A recording medium according to claim 12
wherein,

 said controller further comprises a printer recognizing unit that inquires and recognizes
25 functions of the printer connected to the controller,

 said analyzing unit and said error processing unit execute the respective processes based on the functions of a printer currently connected to the controller recognized by the printer recognizing unit.

30 16. A recording medium according to claim 14
wherein,

 said preset data storage unit stores preset data of the printer informed from the host in advance.

35 17. A recording medium according to claim 15
wherein,

 said preset data storage unit stores

preset data of the printer informed from the host in advance.

- 5 18. A recording medium according to claim 12 wherein, when a printer incapable of transmitting a paper feed completion signal is connected to the controller, said error processing unit estimates the number of pages of which printing have been completed based on the performance of the printer and transmits the estimated number of pages with error data to the host.

PRINTER CONTROLLER, PRINTING SYSTEM, AND
RECORDING MEDIUM THEREFOR

5

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

10 The invention provides a printer controller capable
of ensuring printing data without deteriorating a
performance of the printer without provision of a storage
means for storing printing data in the controller.

15 The controller receives printing data for each page
from a host, transfers the printing data to a printer and
controls the printer to print the printing data while
monitoring states thereof, wherein the controller
comprises: an analyzing unit that analyzes the printing
data and manages the number of pages transferred to the
20 printer; and an error processing unit that informs error
data and the number of pages of which printing have been
completed to the host when an error in which data is not
assured occurs in the printer.

Fig.1

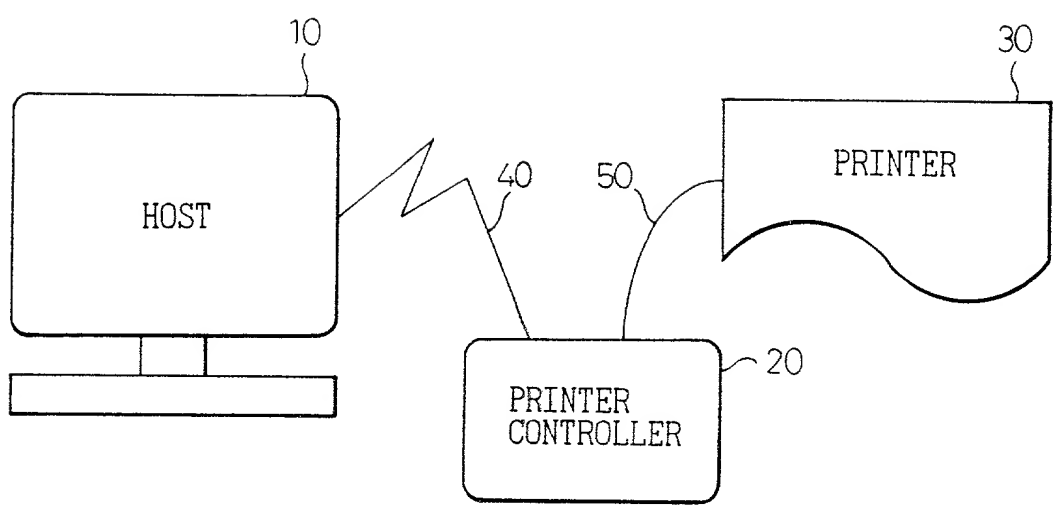


Fig.2

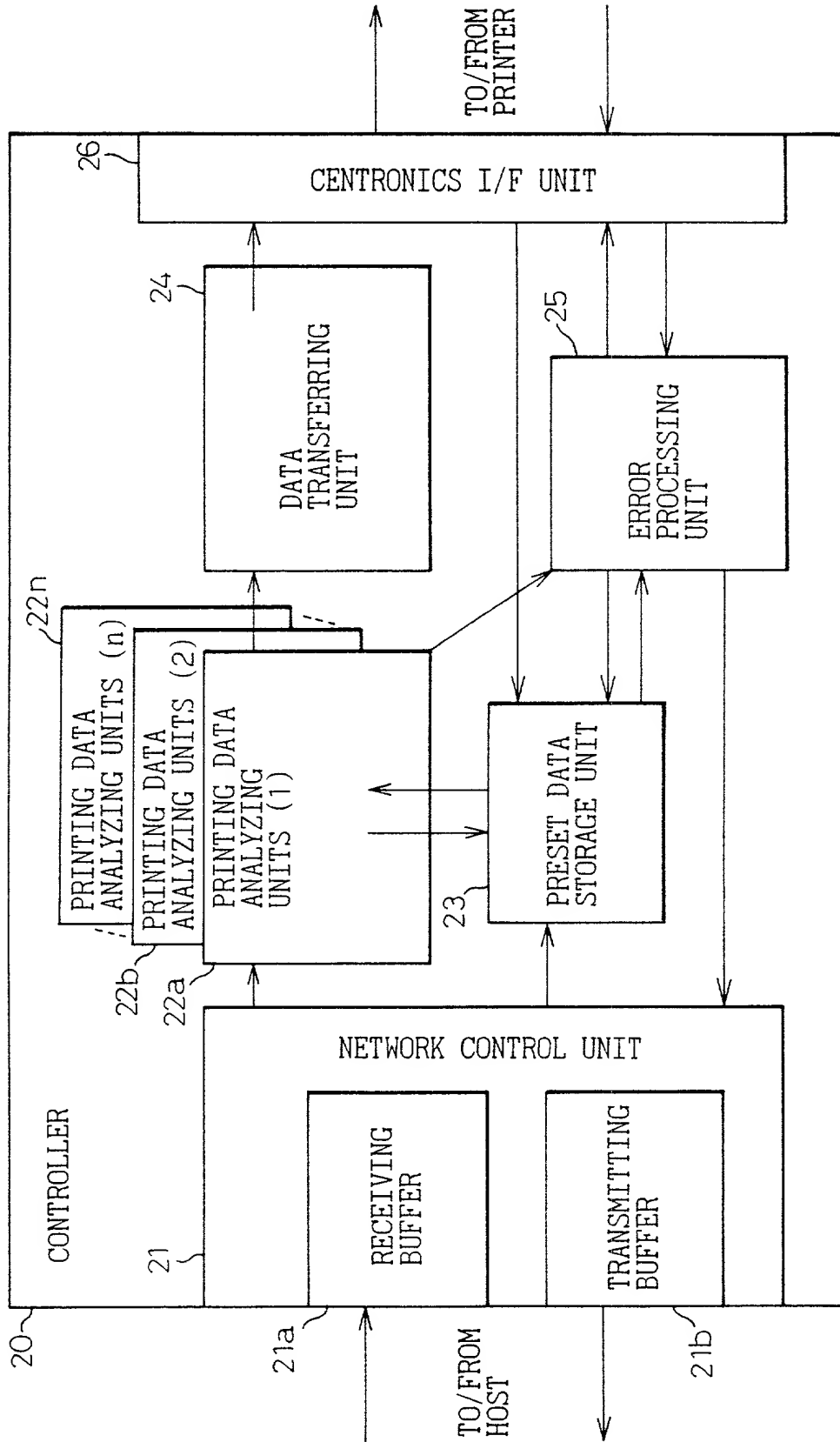


Fig.3

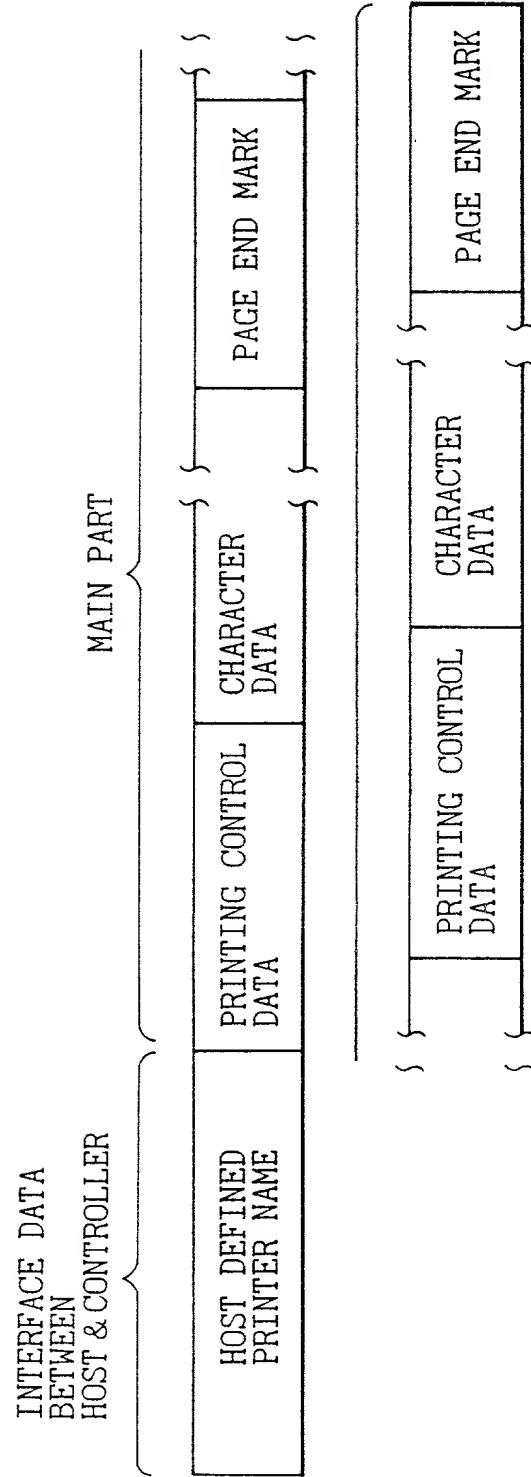


Fig.4

HEADER	ERROR CODE	THE NUMBER OF PRINTED DATA	FLAG
--------	------------	-------------------------------	------

Fig.5

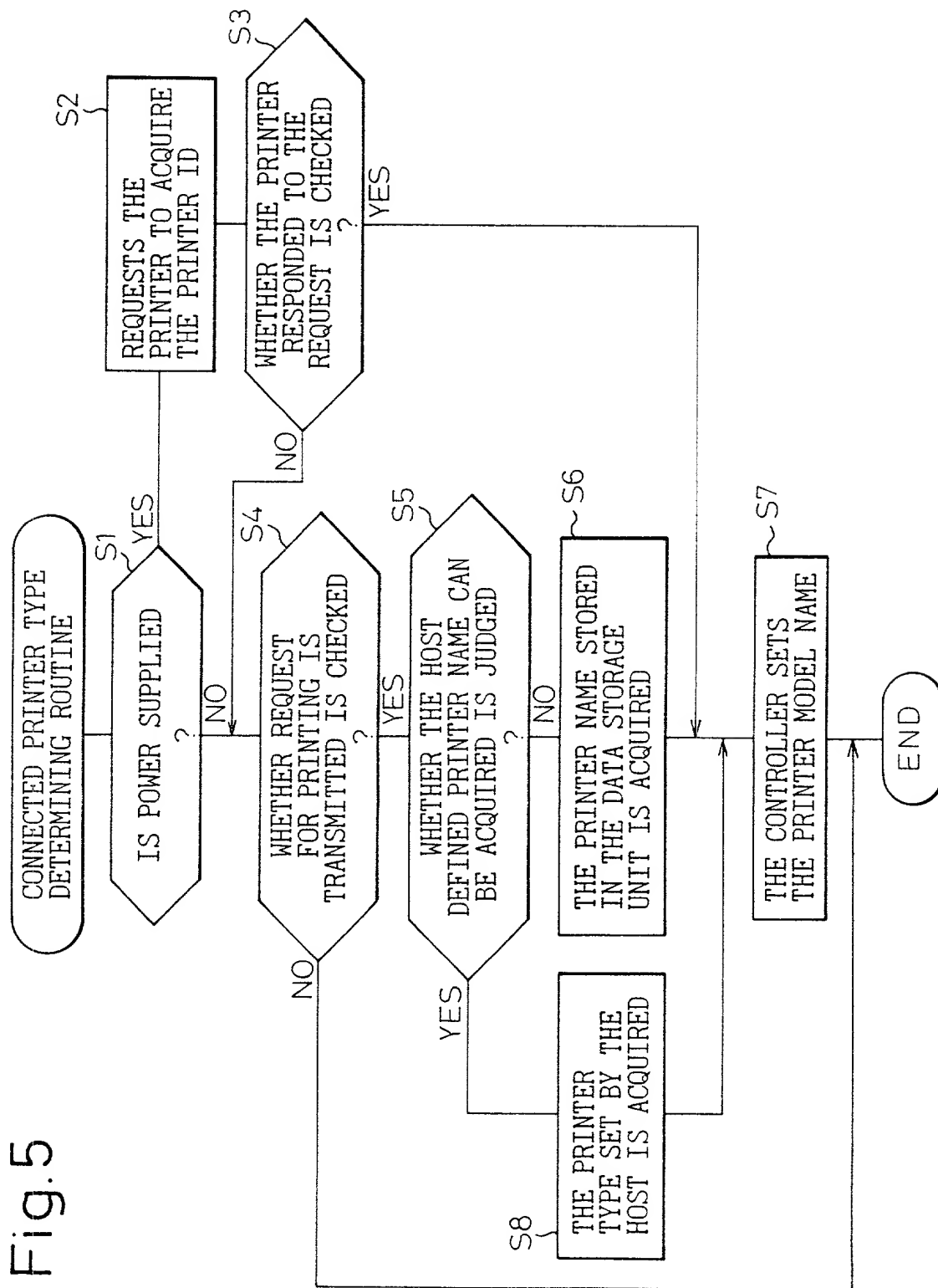


Fig.6

(RECEIVING
BUFFER)

FIRST PAGE	SECOND PAGE	THIRD PAGE	-----	NTH PAGE
------------	-------------	------------	-------	----------

PRINTING
DATA
MANAGEMENT
TABLE

(FIRST PAGE)	PAGE DATA	PRINT CONTROL DATA (PAPER SIZE, ETC.)	DATA FOR ONE PAGE	DATA ADDRESS
(SECOND PAGE)	PAGE DATA	PRINT CONTROL DATA (PAPER SIZE, ETC.)	DATA FOR ONE PAGE	DATA ADDRESS
(THIRD PAGE)	PAGE DATA	PRINT CONTROL DATA (PAPER SIZE, ETC.)	DATA FOR ONE PAGE	DATA ADDRESS
⋮				
(NTH PAGE)	PAGE DATA	PRINT CONTROL DATA (PAPER SIZE, ETC.)	DATA FOR ONE PAGE	DATA ADDRESS

Fig.7

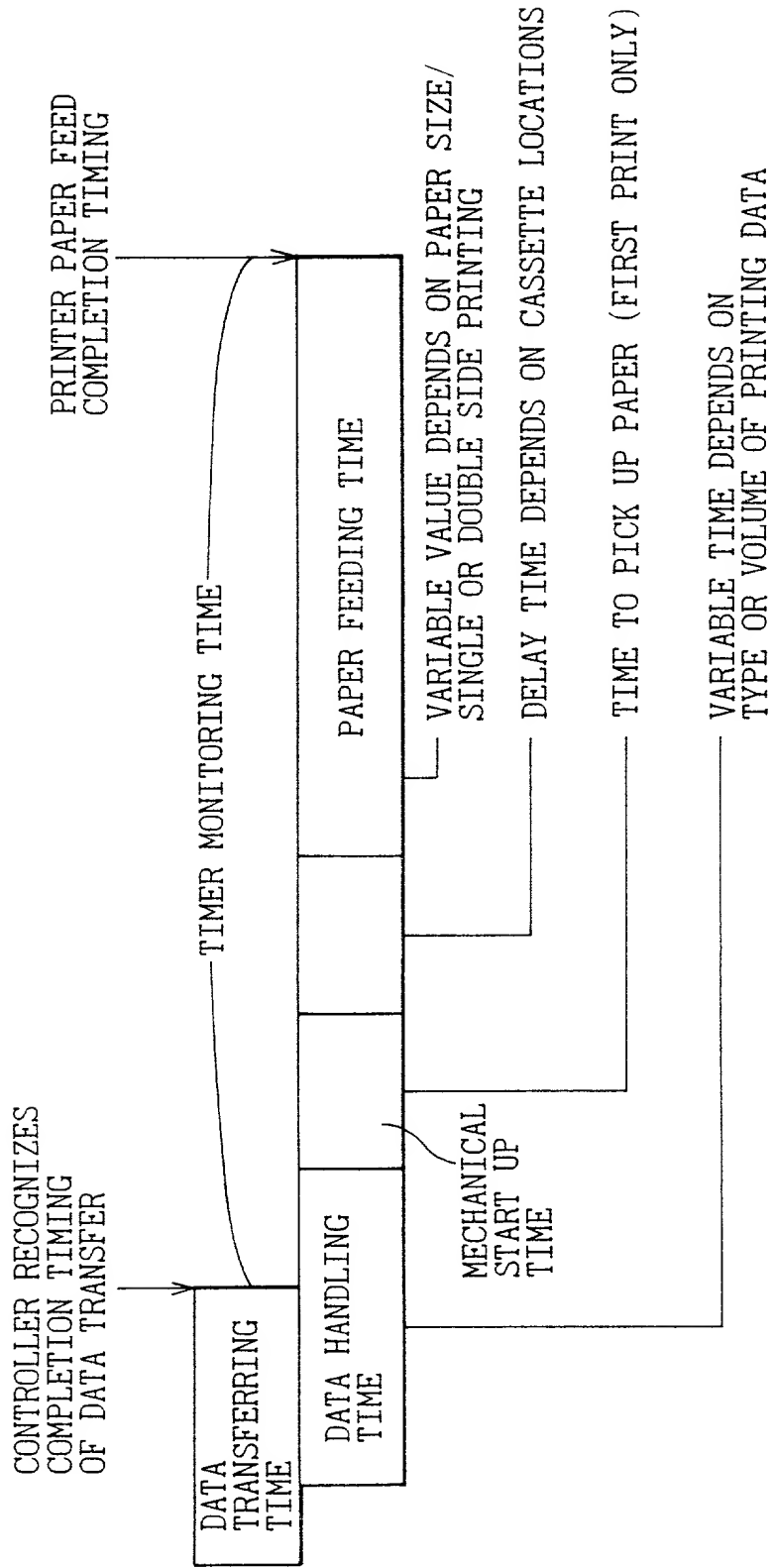


Fig.8A

	FIRST PRINT DELAY TIME	A3	A4	A5	B4	B5	RESERVE
MODEL 1	t1	t1A	t1B	t1C	t1D	t1E	
MODEL 2	t2	t2A	t2B	t2C	t2D	t2E	
MODEL N	tN	tNA	tNB	tNC	tND	tNE	
RESERVE							

Fig.8B

	CASSETTE LOCATION 1	CASSETTE LOCATION 2	CASSETTE LOCATION 3	RESERVE
MODEL 1	O	t1X	t1Y	
MODEL 2	O	t2X	t2Y	
MODEL N	O	tNX	tNY	
RESERVE				

Fig.9

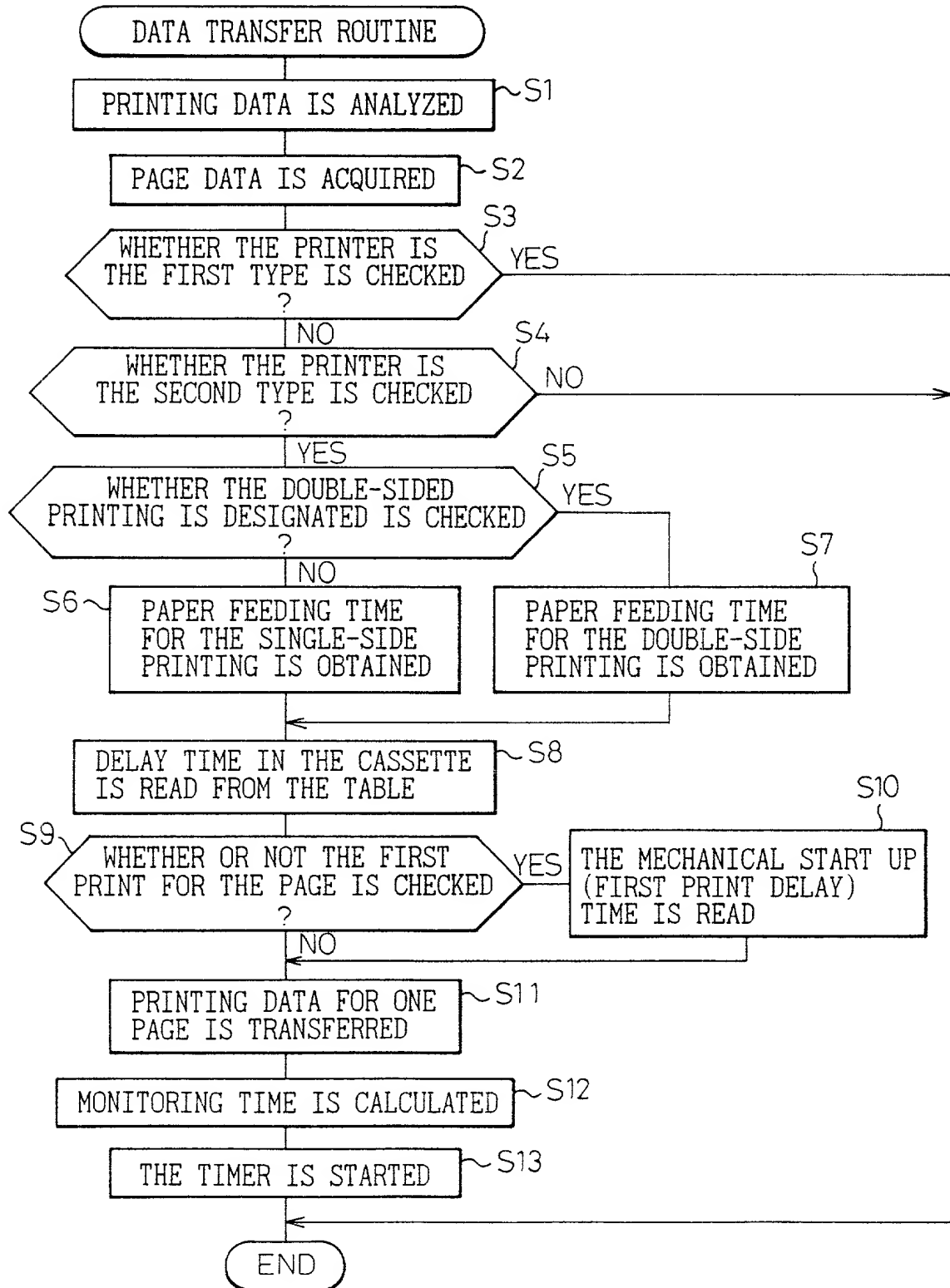


Fig.10A

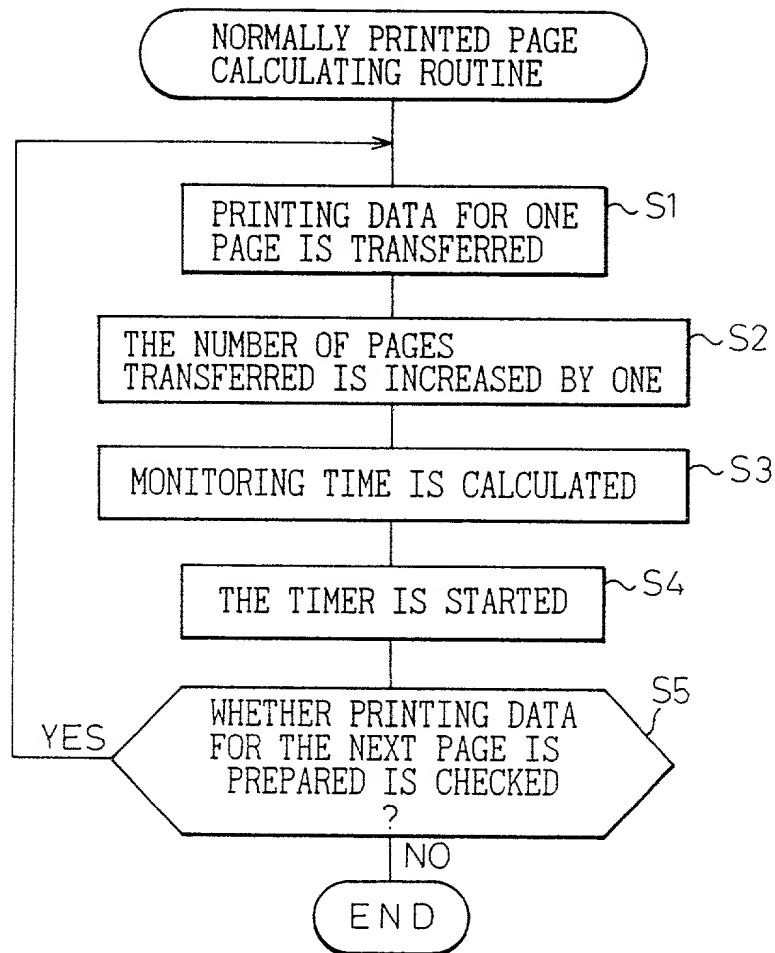


Fig.10B

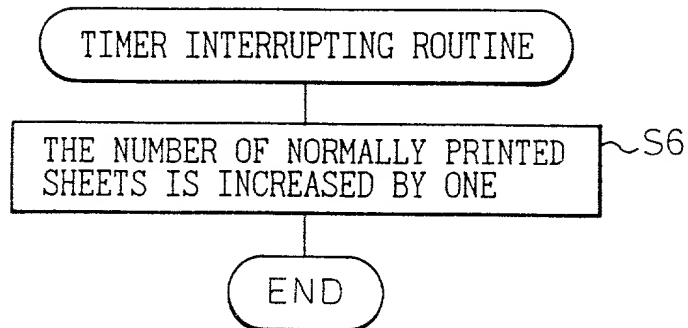


Fig.10C

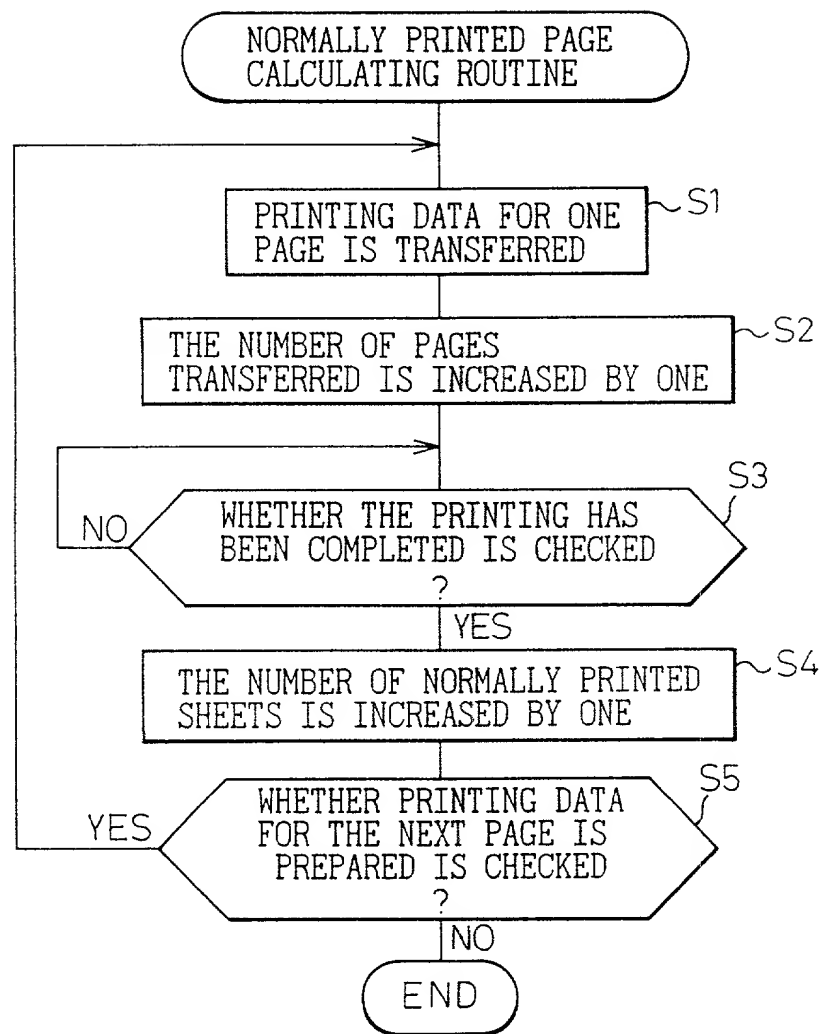


Fig.11A

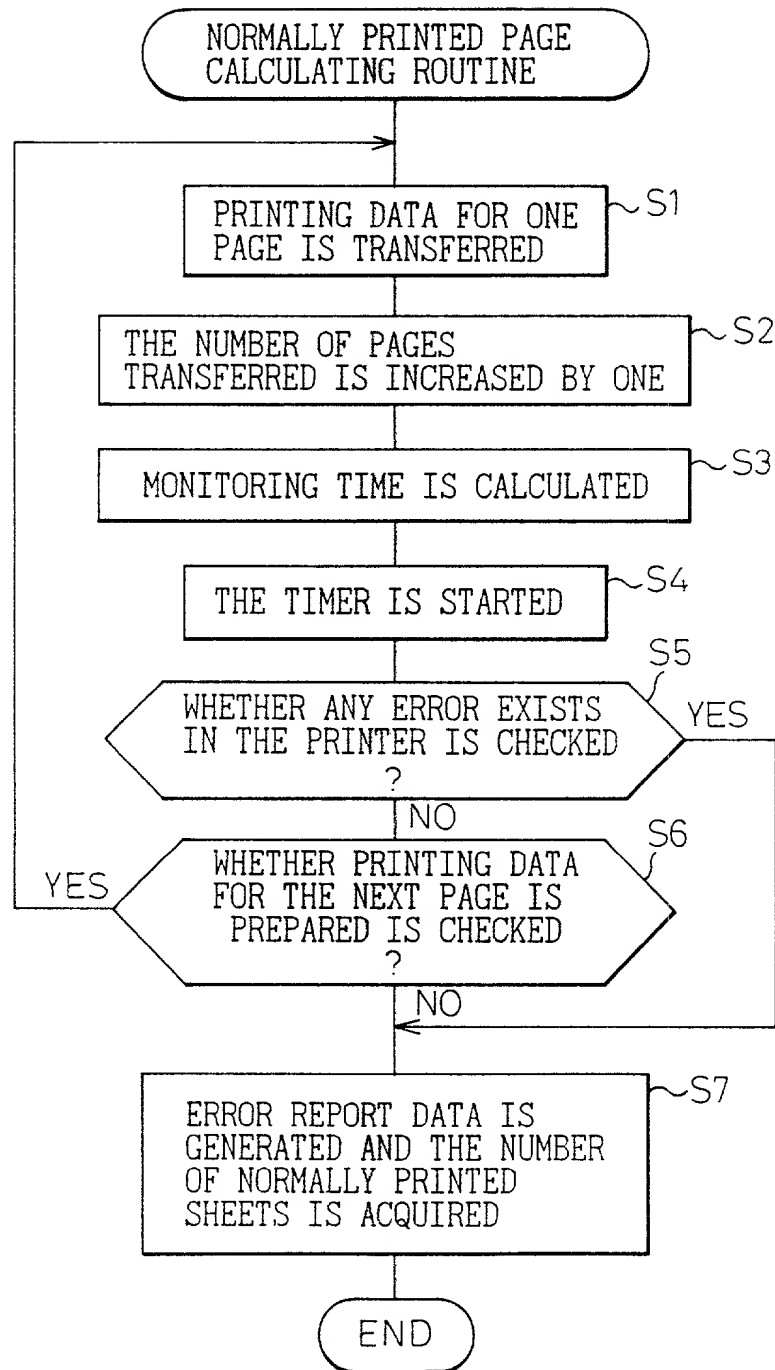


Fig.11B

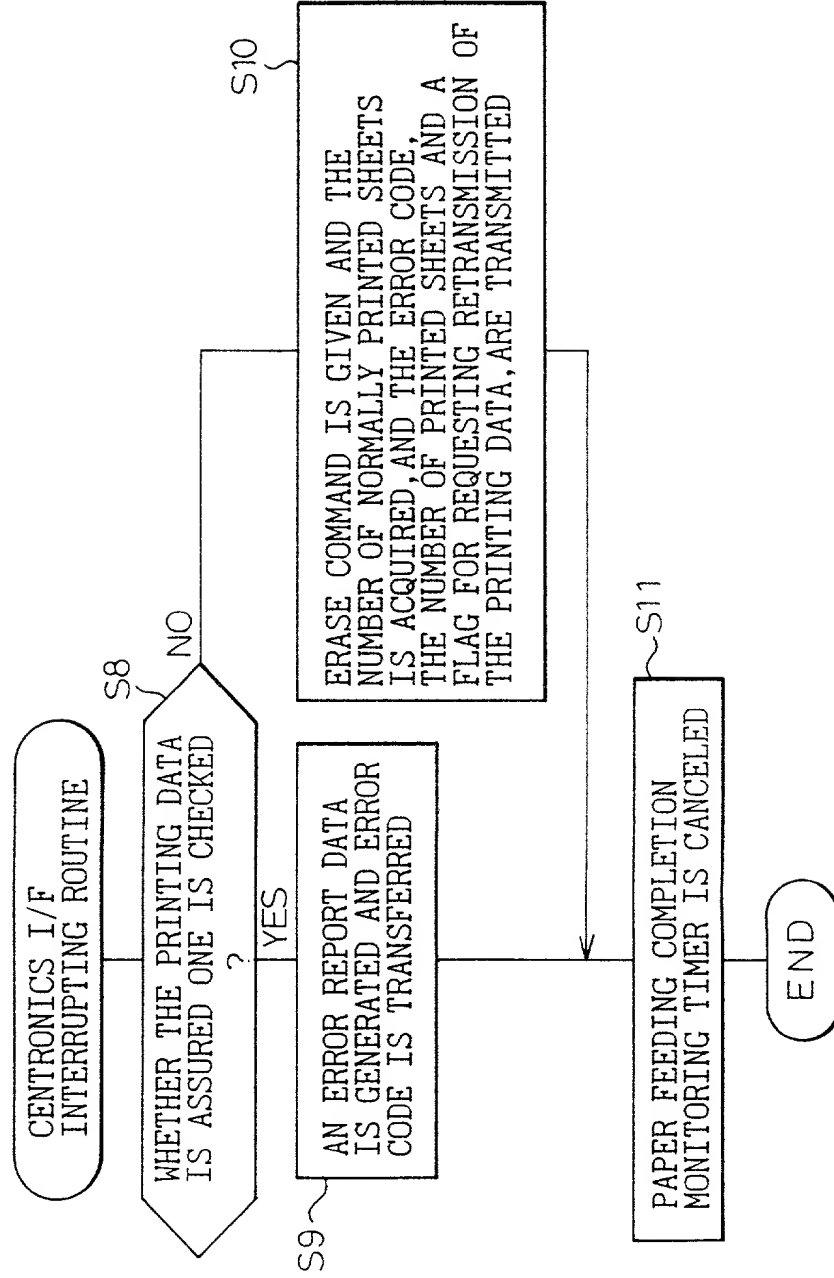


Fig.12A

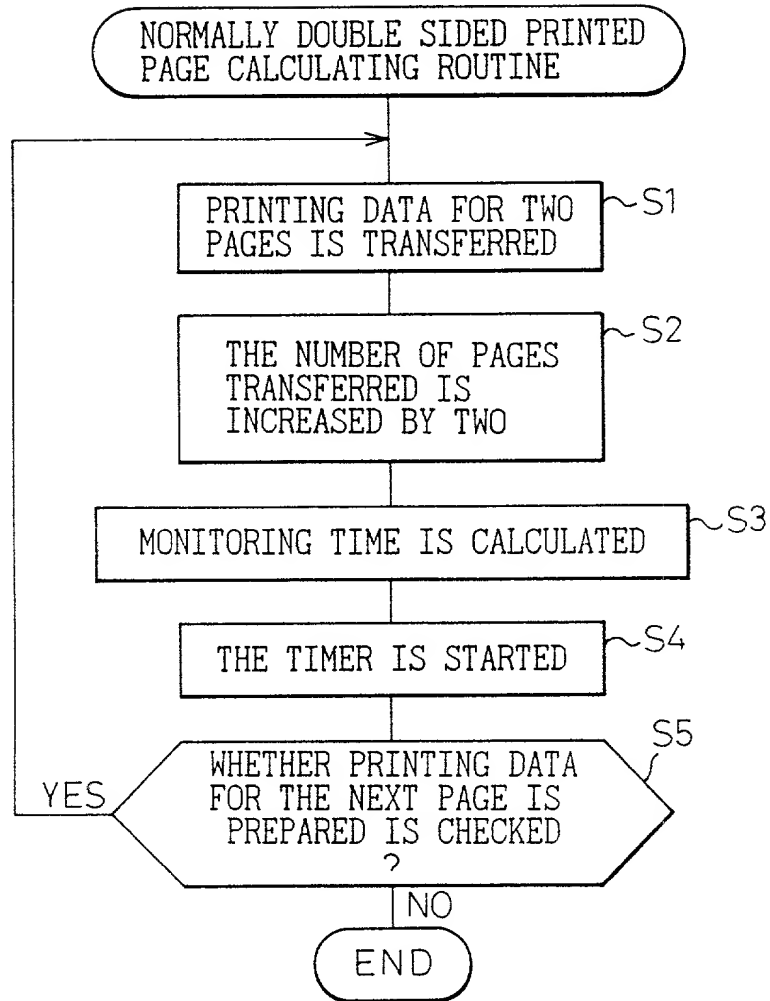


Fig.12B

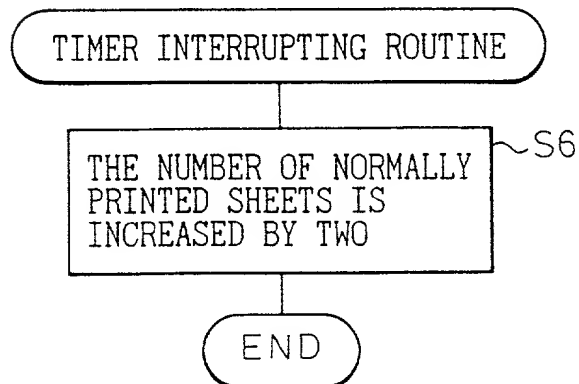


Fig.13

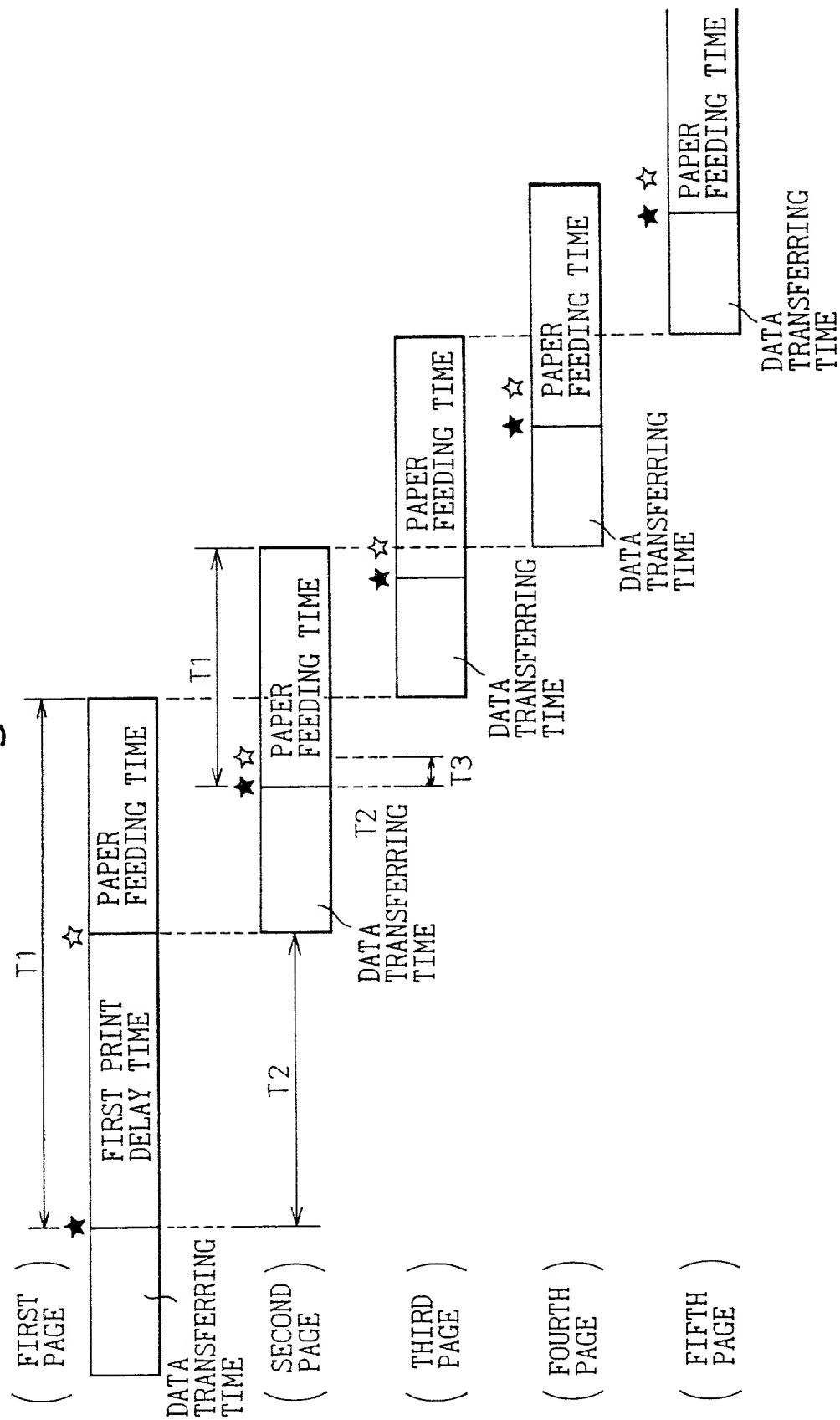


FIG. 14 is a timing diagram showing the sequence of operations for the first page of a document. The diagram illustrates the timing of data transferring, first print delay, and paper feeding times for the first page.

Fig.14

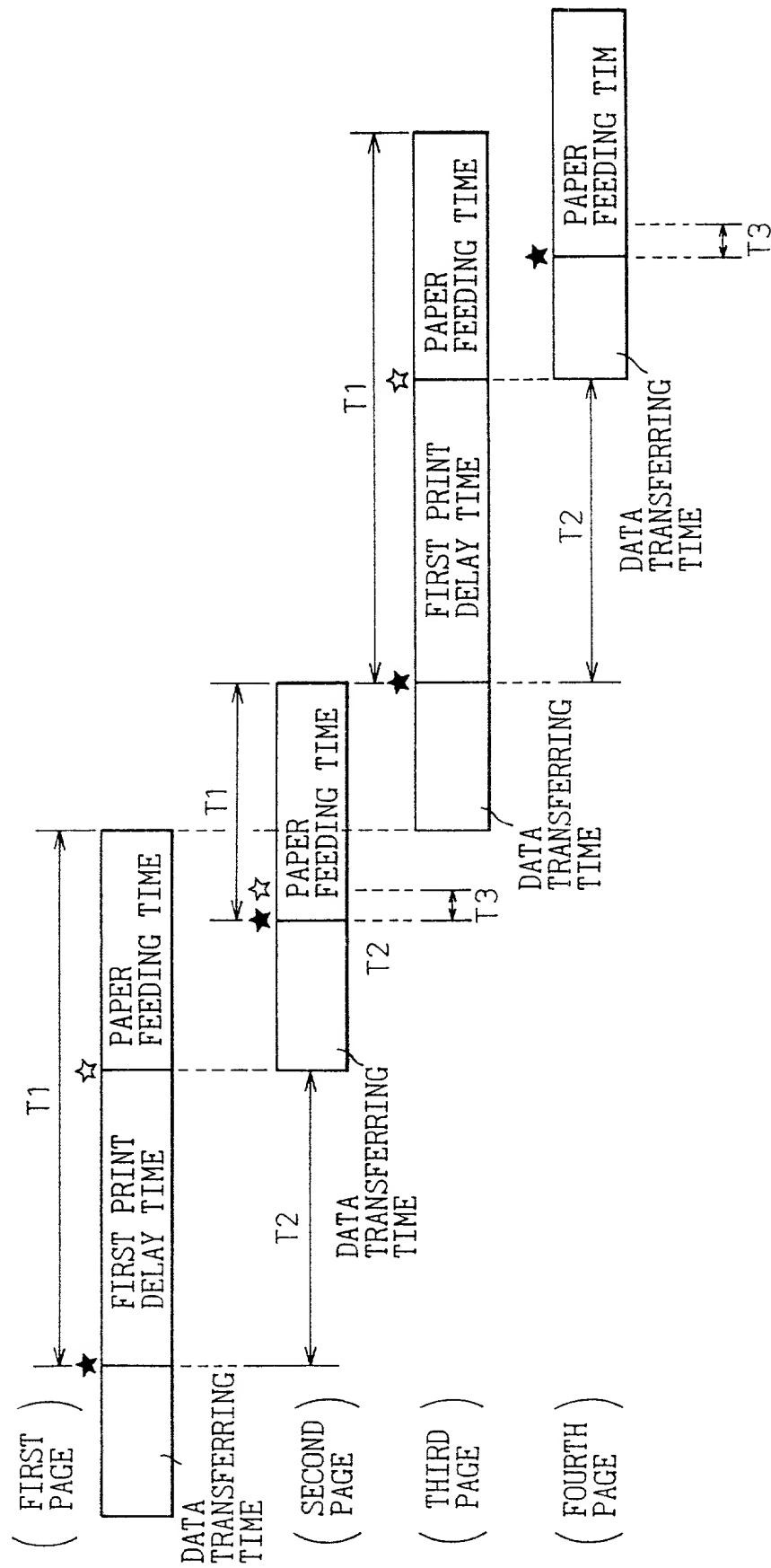


Fig.15A

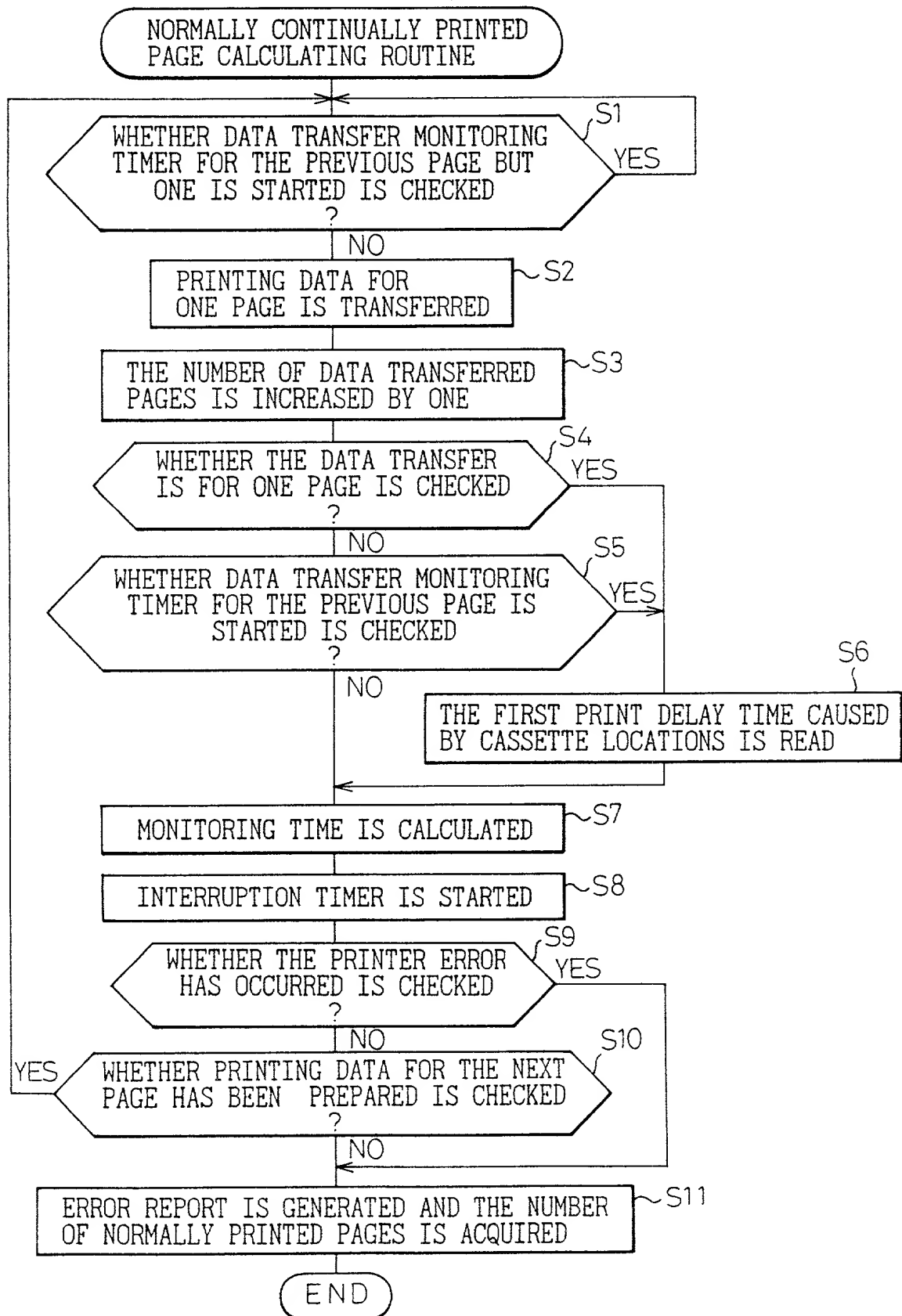
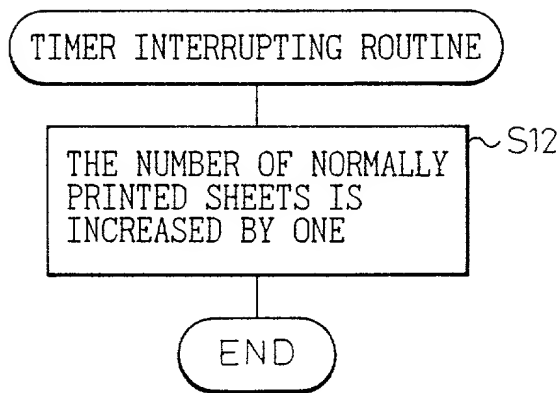


Fig.15B



Declaration and Power of Attorney for U.S. Patent Application

特許出願宣言書及び委任状

Japanese Language Declaration

日本語宣言書

下記の氏名の発明者として、私は以下の通り宣言します。

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

私の住所、私書箱、国籍は下記の私の氏名の後に記載された通りです。

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated next to my name.

下記の名称の発明に関して請求範囲に記載され、特許出願している発明内容について、私が最初かつ唯一の発明者（下記の氏名が一つの場合）もしくは最初かつ共同発明者であると（下記の名称が複数の場合）信じています。

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

PRINTER CONTROLLER, PRINTING SYSTEM,AND RECORDING MEDIUM THEREFOR

上記発明の明細書（下記の欄でxが印がついていない場合は、本書に添付）は、

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☐ 月 日に提出され、米国出願番号または特許協定条約国際出願番号を _____ とし、
(該当する場合) _____ に訂正されました。☐ was filed on _____
as United States Application Number or
PCT International Application Number
_____ and was amended on _____
(if applicable).

私は、特許請求範囲を含む上記訂正後の明細書を検討し、内容を理解していることをここに表明します。

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

私は、連邦規則法典第37編第1条56項に定義されるとおり、特許資格の有無について重要な情報を開示する義務があることを認めます。

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

Japanese Language Declaration (日本語宣言書)

私は、米国法典第35編119条(a)-(d)項又は365条(b)項に基づき下記の、米国以外の国の少なくとも一カ国を指定している特許協力条約365(a)項に基づく国際出願、又は外国での特許出願もしくは発明者証の出願についての外国優先権をここに主張するとともに、優先権を主張している、本出願の前に出願された特許または発明者証の外国出願を以下に、枠内をマークすることで、示しています。

Prior Foreign Application(s)

外国での先行出願

10-184195(Pat. Appln.)

(Number)
(番号)

Japan

(Country)
(国名)

(Number)
(番号)

(Country)
(国名)

I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119 (a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Priority Not Claimed

優先権主張なし

30/June/1998

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(出願年月日)

☐

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(出願年月日)

☐

私、第35編米国法典119条(e)項に基づいて下記の米国外特許出願規定に記載された権利をここに主張いたします。

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

私は、下記の米国法典第35編120条に基づいて下記の米国外特許出願に記載された権利、又は米国を指定している特許協力条約365条(c)に基づき権利をここに主張します。また、本出願の各請求範囲の内容が米国法典第35編112条第1項又は特許協力条約で規定された方法で先行する米国外特許出願に開示されていない限り、その先行米国外出願書提出日以降で本出願書の日本国内または特許協力条約国際提出日までの期間中に入手された、連邦規則法典第37編1条56項で定義された特許資格の有無に関する重要な情報について開示義務があることを認識しています。

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s), or 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of application.

(Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned)
(現況: 特許許可済、係属中、放棄済)

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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Japanese Language Declaration
(日本語宣言書)

委任状: 私は下記の発明者として、本出願に関する一切の手続きを米特許商標局に対して遂行する弁理士または代理人として、下記の者を指名いたします。(弁理士、または代理人の氏名及び登録番号を明記のこと)

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith (list name and registration number)
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